

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

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17 APR 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT: Comments Pertaining to the D/NRO Paper  
Concerning OXCART Phase-out or Retention

1. The following comments by subject and/or sub-paragraph relate to D/NRO memo to Deputy Director of Defense:

A. CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING OXCART PROGRAM PHASE-OUT

1. The reference to "several situations" included:

- (a) Selection and installation of EWS System in SR-71
- (b) Validation of Sensor Systems
- (c) Comparisons of A-12 and SR-71
- (d) Questionable conclusion that SR-71 could satisfactorily accomplish photo requirements.

B. REQUIREMENT FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF COVERT OVERFLIGHT CAPABILITY

1. History in the IDEALIST U-2 program strongly supports that OXCART's civilian covert capability will be needed several times within the next five year time span. Specifically, Agency U-2s have flown in excess of 500 missions to date. 26 of these were flown over the Soviet Union between 1956-1960. 50 were flown over Cuba during the period 1960-1962. 55 missions were flown in the Laos, Viet Nam and

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Cambodia area during the period 1961-1965. The latter two cases (Cuba and Southeast Asia) clearly reflect the requirement for and the use of covert manned reconnaissance during periods preceeding crisis or hostilities. The mixed fleet of U-2 and A-12 manned aircraft with the Agency are considered to be a mandatory national requirement. It is agreed that in certain situations such as Cuba and Southeast Asia it is logical that the mission can and should transition to the military whenever other overt military actions dictate. Conversely, there have been in excess of 100 missions flown in other parts of the world (Nepal/Nepal/Tibet/China, South America and the South Pacific, etc.), subsequent to 1960 where in national objectives and policy did not subsequently require overt military involvement. There is little reason to believe that similar requirements will not be repeated in the future.

2. Reference sub-paragraph 4 - Overseas Bases. Discussion point based upon premise that a prepared overseas base is required. Most contingency plans would no doubt be best satisfied with a prepared or pre-coordinated base for operations or stagings. However, it should be pointed out that selected high priority contingency missions could be flown with [ ] profiles. Advanced tanker staging support would be required.

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### C. RESPONSIVENESS

1. Successful CIA management during peace time operations of the past 10-12 years has unquestionably proven itself as responsive to the national intelligence requirements. Many of these missions were negotiated with second or sometimes third

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party countries employing CIA modus operandi. Timely coordination and use of these methods by the Air Force would probably be extremely slow if not impossible during periods of tranquility.

2. CIA reconnaissance operations including OXCART are principally oriented toward satisfying national intelligence requirements. Products from these operations have been made available to the Department of Defense for their distribution to subordinate units consistent with national interest. It is agreed that under certain conditions one might conclude that OXCART operations would be less responsive to the Department of Defense needs. However, as demonstrated in North Vietnam and Korea, the DOD and other Government agencies as well, received timely and usable photography which otherwise they would not have had from any other source. Agency covert methods and procedures must be protected in situations such as North Vietnam and Korea. The covert capability and its plausible denial as needed would no longer exist without this type protection.

D. COMMAND AND CONTROL

1. The Agency's channel for command and control could conceivably provide better and more direct control in situations dictating sudden or unexpected changes. Relaying national level decisions or directives could be in the hands of the operating Detachment Commander within 10-15 minutes.

2. In some cases CIA methods of reporting or handling operational incidents and situations may be better. Direct tie-in or coordination with in country embassy and high level contacts with foreign government officials is probably a strong point.

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3. Knowledge of CIA reconnaissance operations is available to the DOD thru Black Book approval mechanisms and awareness on the part of JCS (JRC) of each missions profile. Although JCS does not exercise control and command over CIA operations, they are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that there is not a conflict with other DOD sensitive reconnaissance activities. Coordination procedures are in effect whereby the JRC and Project Headquarters exchange mission data. This procedure has worked very well in the past and there is no reason to believe that the same will not continue.

4. Pre and post mission knowledge of sensitive operations is believed to be less within the CIA structure.

E. INTEGRATION OF TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

1. Success of any covert overflight capability (CIA and/or Air Force) is dependent upon mutual respect and acceptance of the fact that required technical and operational support is available to carry-out national objectives. This is particularly true in the development of long-range sensors and EWS Systems as well as the cited logistical support.

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